

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/980,364
Reply to Office Action mailed June 16, 2005

REMARKS:

Applicants have read and considered the Office Action dated June 16, 2005. Claims 3-7 and 10-74 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the cancelled claims in a continuation application. Claims 8-9 and 75-76 are currently pending after entry of the present Amendment. Entry of the Amendment and reconsideration of the claims in view of the following Remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Status

The Examiner has allowed claims 75-76. The Examiner has also indicated that claims 8-9 are objected to for depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants disagree with this objection, and submit that claims 8-9 are already in independent form. The Examiner's attention is respectfully drawn to Applicants' previous Response filed March 24, 2005, wherein claims 8-9 were amended into independent format. Applicants assert that since these claims do not depend from a rejected base claim, they are in condition for allowance as indicated by the Examiner.

Regarding the remaining claims, Applicants do not concede the propriety of the outstanding rejections but have cancelled claims 3-7 and 10-74 to speed prosecution of the case, rendering the rejections of these claims moot.

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Summary

Applicants assert that all pending claims have been allowed or indicated allowable, and a Notice of Allowance is hereby solicited. If the Examiner feels that a telephone interview may be helpful in this matter, please contact Applicant's representative at (612) 336-4728.

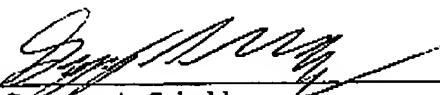


Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.

Dated: 12/16/05

By:



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